

Exploring the decisions of employees to stay in an organization

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Abstract

This study explored the experiences of teaching and non-teaching personnel of a private school in Metro Manila, Philippines. One of the challenges faced by the private schools in the country is the high turnover of teachers. After gaining experience from a private school, employees, especially teachers leave the institution and transfer to government-funded schools. Usually, financial reason is the number one consideration for transferring to government schools. Government teaching and non-teaching personnel receive a relatively higher salary. However, there are employees who remain loyal and committed as they choose to stay. The researchers used qualitative case study design through interview to capture the personal experiences of the teaching and non-teaching personnel purposively chosen to participate in the study. The findings and discussion of the results of the study offer inspiration and motivation for fixed term and regular teaching and non-teaching personnel to remain loyal and committed to the academic organization. The study will also serve as direction and guide for the school administrators to sustain the benefits and programs that motivate employees. Likewise, the study also provides opportunities for the school administrators to advance on some aspects in order to entice employees to stay in the organization.

Keywords: commitment, loyalty, management, motivation, private school

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1. Introduction

Employees play a vital role in the success of the organization. Many organizations come up with personnel development programs; provide benefit packages; design clear systems and procedures; create a work-life balance for employees, implement an equitable ranking and promotion policy and fair performance appraisal. The primary aim is to attract employees or personnel. The list of offered packages for their development and welfare leads to longer tenure. The longer an employee works in the organization, the more productive they become. There is an ownership of the vision, mission and goals of the organization. These employees become one with the leaders or they serve as mentors and coaches to the new members of the organization.

In the United States of America, federal data from the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) revealed that private school teachers have higher turnover rates than their public school counterparts. A parallel situation is happening in the Philippines, private school teachers have higher turnover rates than their public school counterparts. It has been a problem for the private schools as often mentioned during annual planning and conferences. Private schools try to make measures to lessen teaching and non-teaching personnel's turnover. These would often look at certain variables such as the employee's satisfaction with his job and the environmental pressures, inside and outside his company, that affect personnel's determination to continue or terminate.

However, there is a private school in Metro Manila, Philippines where personnel's turnover seems to be less of its concern, since there are personnel who stayed for decades in the school. During the recent opening of classes, teaching and non-teaching personnel were awarded by their loyal service in the said institution. Several reasons may be investigated for their loyalty and commitment to the school.

What makes the teaching and non-teaching personnel stay long in the institution? With these in mind, the researchers decided to investigate the factors that make personnel stay in a private school. This will give the personnel a deep realization on what the school had contributed to their personal as well as professional growth and advancement. It will also be beneficial to the school since it will have a mirror on how it was able to build among and within its personnel organizational commitment.

In the present world of business, change and restructuring in an organization becomes inevitable, employees' loyalty and motivation are the major challenges currently faced by most companies. Mehta, et al (2010) mentioned that finding and retaining the best employee is every company's challenge. In the past, once hired, an employee believed that it was a lifetime job and the manager expected his loyalty to the company. Thus, employees used to be devoted to their employer. This loyalty between employees and employer has gradually changed due to the advent of globalization

when employee begun to face restructuring, relocation and downsizing. The employer broke the rules, mutual obligation is no longer expected, and this resulted to employee's turn over.

According to Allen, et al (2010), losing talented employees can cost an organization in a variety of ways, especially to the employers. The organization might lose clients, there may be team disruptions, other employees might be influenced toward leaving business and a loss in productivity may occur. Evans and Lindsay (1996) cited that the employee's status is upgraded having resources to be utilized to an asset that needs to be promoted, guarded and developed.

Maintaining high levels of affective organizational commitment is important for organizational survival and well-being. The employees' loyalty and motivation have been given emphasis because motivated and loyal employees will act in the best interest of the organization.

The study conducted by Omar (2010) identified the factors that contribute to organizational enhancement through employee's loyalty to improve management performance. All the component of employee loyalty was able to show a strong relationship with the predictor variable reward and compensations, working environment and peer cooperation, position and titles, employee benefits, and relationship with superior/supervisors.

Loyalty can be considered as a component of employee's engagement and an individual's belief about the terms and conditions of the organization. Issues related to employees' loyalty in educational organization has become vital because this will determine employees' commitment. All the literature and studies reviewed will provide insights and information to the development of the present study.

2. Methodology

The researchers used qualitative case study design through interview to capture the personal experiences of the teaching and non-teaching personnel purposively chosen to participate in the study.

2.1. Sample description

The study included five samples, two are non-teaching personnel and three teaching personnel. There is only one male among the teaching personnel and all females for the non-teaching personnel. The average age is 50. The teaching staffs are all licensed teachers, two of whom have passed the MA Comprehensive examination while the other one has MA units. The non-teaching personnel are all bachelor's degree holder and one of them pass the Civil Service examination. These five participants have served the school for twenty years and above. The Prefect of Discipline was also interviewed for triangulation and validation purposes.

2.2. Data collection methods

The participants in the study are chosen purposively. The five participants were chosen using fishbowl technique. The study included the cases of three teaching and two non-teaching personnel of a private school in Metro Manila, Philippines to assess the reasons why there are personnel who opt to stay in private sectarian school rather than transfer to the public school. Interview questionnaires were prepared and were validated by experts. The participants answered the questionnaires through face-to-face, phone and voice chat interview. Questions mainly dwell on their personal and professional feelings towards the institution, motivation at work, job experiences, accomplishments and challenges. An immediate supervisor also participated in the study for triangulation and validation of data. To establish validity and reliability of the data, research method is supplemented by data analysis which includes thorough examination of school files, records from human resources offices, and others.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Case 1

Happiness at work is one factor that drives personnel to stay in an organization. Wesarat P., Sharif, M.Y., Abdul-Majid, A.H. (2015) mentioned that happiness at the workplace refers to how satisfied people are with their work and lives. The idea of happiness is related to individual's subjective well-being. Happiness at the workplace is crucial for improving productivity in any organization. Happy people are productive people while those people who are unhappy may not pay full attention to any task. Some scholars believe that organizations which can maintain long-term happiness at the workplace could probably increase and sustain productivity.

Fisher, C. D. (2010) declared that happiness in the form of pleasant moods and emotions, well-being, and positive attitudes has been attracting increasing attention throughout psychology research. The interest in happiness has also extended to workplace experiences.

The first participant claimed to be happy being employed because of several reasons.

“This school offers numerous benefits such as scholarship grant for my nephew since I am single and no child of my own, but the school is generous enough to grant me this benefit.; educational tours that expose the personnel to the tourist destinations here and abroad. It is through this program that employees have the chance to learn other people’s culture which is vital especially for teachers. Likewise, the quality of education that students get from the school is something I am proud of.”

The experience also proves to be a rewarding journey, especially being with students and colleagues at work.

“Thus, one of my most rewarding experience in this institution is when I see my former students succeed in the line of work that they choose, and they come back to see me and tell me their appreciation that somehow the role that I played in their life was partly attributed to their success. This school had given me opportunity to grow professionally and it tapped my leadership potential. I held the positions of Subject Area Coordinator, Cluster Coordinator, and Assistant Principal for Student Affairs / Prefect of Discipline, Assistant Principal for Academic Affairs. I also consider these leadership posts, and at present my being a full-time teacher/ adviser and the other humble services that I render my school as my greatest achievements in the school.”

Lastly, the challenge and fulfillment being offered at work eventually create a synergy in affirming professional development.

“I am now a full-time teacher and serving as an adviser to my students. This gives me satisfaction and fulfillment since I applied here as a teacher. I feel that I am most I am most effective as a class adviser. I see my leaders as looking at the welfare of the employees, this also inspire to work to the best of my ability. I would still see myself working in this school until retirement. I will only quit if my health fails.”

During the interview with the Prefect of Discipline as an administrative officer, it was confirmed that the teacher is indeed happy in the school during the course of his employment. Appointment documents show that from being a Cluster Coordinator, the teacher is now back to be an adviser post which he likes most: being with the students.

Files from the Human Resource and Management Office (HRMO) would also reveal that the teacher's happiness and satisfaction is reflected on his performance, being evident after receiving the Perfect Attendance Award for a couple of years. This is being strengthened as the Faculty Manual stipulates several benefits such as scholarship opportunities for personnel dependents and educational trips for both local and international destinations.

Research would show that happiness in the workplace would result to productivity. Case 1 is happy in the workplace since his needs are met not just in terms of material benefits but also his sense of belongingness; his self-actualization needs are also met. They see their leaders are models they emulate especially in their dedication and commitment. They are also gratified that there is a harmonious relationship between employees as well as with the leaders.

The happiness that the personnel experienced was translated into work effectiveness so he was assigned to various leadership posts. In the process, the school gained a leader who is an asset to the organization. The length of service that he rendered in the school is a proof that if personnel are happy in what they are doing, then it is a two-way benefit.

3.2. Case 2

Motivation is another factor that advances a personnel's commitment. Hughes, C. (2012) Every employee is at a different stage in their lives, which requires different management techniques. It is shown that motivation must come from within the employee. There are theories that will help describe how managers can influence their employees to self-motivate and produce the best work possible. There are two specific types of motivation: financial and non-financial. In this day in time, there is not always a plentiful amount of money to spend on motivation, so it is important to understand how managers can make their employees feel important without breaking the bank.

Rožman, B., Treven, S., Čančer, V. (2017) Motivation and satisfaction change as individuals age. Using this information, managers and employers can apply appropriate measures to contribute to employees' well-being and better workplace performance, better working relationships with colleagues, higher productivity, and greater creativity.

“What motivated me to stay in my school are the salary and other benefits that the school gives. The benefits include: Bahay Guro, this is the housing unit provided by the school where some of its employees reside which is very near/ walking distance from the school, scholarship for children of employees; annual educational tour (local and abroad) for personnel Likewise, I find the students who are easy to handle and a supportive principal part of the rewarding and inspiring experiences that I have in this institution.”

The employee was able to recognize how the school has played important roles in pursuit of higher goals and professional development in general:

“I was able to pass my comprehensive examination in my graduate studies; I was appointed as grade level team leader and co-chairman of an area in the accreditation committee. These personal accomplishments and humble achievements were possible because of the support of my school.”

Motivation is evident as the teacher owns the vision of the institutions. As benefits and gains equal those being offered by the employee, reward is seen in various forms and each takes pride with the kind of work that they do.

“The system that we have is a source of pride because not all private schools have this system such as ours. I observe that currently, only few teachers are resigning, they choose to stay. Somehow, they realize that the salary and other benefits the school give is competitive in terms of salaries and benefits especially to teaching and non-teaching that do well in their job and enroll in graduate and post graduate studies. I am also proud of the graduates that we have. Most of them are successful in their chosen careers. This is one of the non-financial rewards that I get from teaching in this school, I am proud of their formation. I would also consider the harmonious relationship of teaching and non-teaching personnel as a source of inspiration.”

The Prefect of Discipline also attested that the family of this teacher resides at the Bahay Guro. Her files at the HRMO would support her academic achievements in the graduate school meeting some criteria that raised her salary as specified in the Ranking and Promotion Policy of the school. This policy as stipulated in the Faculty Manual warrants the equitable and fair salary of personnel making it competitive.

Case 2 shows the financial and non-financial rewards that inspire her to do her tasks. For the financial reward are the salaries, benefits such as scholarship grants to employees and their dependents, housing provision, educational tour to name a few. For the non- financial rewards, these include the achievements of alumni, the formation of students, tapping of personnel's potential; support of leaders to subordinates and the harmonious relationship of personnel.

Case 2 is an evidence that the different theories of motivation are utilized in the inspiring people in the organization. Varied age group may be motivated in different ways, but they are parallel in terms of the construct that inspire them. They see their leaders are models they emulate especially in their dedication and commitment.

3.3. Case 3

The experiences of personnel working in a Catholic school can be considered as best teacher for them (Zommers, 2009). *“The key findings of this study have implications on the way that Catholic school leaders structure their schools, and in the way that they involve teachers in the decision-making process. Principals within any Catholic school structure should employ leadership styles that rely on the expertise and participation of teachers.”*

Conditions concerning teacher retention involve opportunities to innovate programs and projects that directly relate to teacher wellness and overall well-being. Developing successful schools may commence at the practices of hiring and retaining qualified personnel, strengthened by the provision of competitive compensation package to those who deserve it.

“My most rewarding experience in the institution is the training that I got from it. I consider the training and formation that I get from my school so beneficial for my personal, professional and spiritual growth. I learned so many things not only in my work as a teacher but also in harnessing my leadership potential, I learned through the leadership experience that the school had given how to handle and work well with other people. I am most proud of my accomplishments such as having been appointed to various leadership offices. I experienced being the Activity and Program Coordinator, Subject Area Coordinator, Grade Level Team Leader and as an area chairperson in the PAASCU Accreditation. I would also feel the respect given me by my colleagues. I also experienced the chance to travel to local tourist destinations and especially abroad. I will not be able to see countries/ places such as Hong Kong; Singapore; Seoul, South Korea; Beijing, China; Osaka, Kyoto, Japan if not because of the educational tour organized by the school wherein a certain percentage of the cost is shouldered by the employer and the rest of the amount is paid through salary deduction.”

The Prefect of Discipline supported the in-service trainings intended for career and professional growth before the opening of classes and within the school year. Likewise, Basic Faith Formation for spiritual growth and transformation is given on a monthly basis. She also confirmed that the teacher is one of the most respected among her colleagues.

Documents at the Exhibit Room corroborates that this teacher is a chairperson of one of the areas of the accreditation committee. Files at the HRMO show succession program to tap the leadership potentials of teachers.

A genuine concern for the welfare of teachers/ personnel is vital for teachers' retention. If teachers experience that the school leaders, consider their well-being then they will feel appreciated and would treasure the experience in this kind of workplace. One important experience is allowing them to express their opinion and including their voice in decision making activity.

Working in a Catholic school as perceived by teachers in the public government sector may not be enticing but there are teachers in this sectarian school who would find the job rewarding and worth their sacrifices.

3.4. Cases 4 and 5

As employees are provided by appropriate and competitive package, rewards are seen to be a positive reinforcement in motivating them to be effective members of the institution. Non-teaching personnel of a school act as the backbone of school operations which makes their job performance to be crucial.

I consider the generosity of my employer in terms of benefits as reward for personnel. All my three children were given the privilege to be schooled in a private, Catholic school because of my employer. My eldest child is now about to graduate from college. I was able to sustain sending them to school because of my work.

Employees feel how the school administration pays attention to the wellness and well-being of the school community. Eventually, this translates to positive and favorable outcomes as work performance improves.

“My school / employer is also very much concerned with my personal as well as spiritual growth. I am proud that I have a good relationship with my boss and with other coworkers. It is also in this school where I found a true and good friend. I am enjoying my work. The most rewarding experience that I have in this school is when my effort in the tasks that I do was noticed and I was awarded as Employee of the Year last March 2018. Aside from this, I am proud that I am presently working in a Catholic school where I am expected to be an evangelizer of faith.”

As employees fully realize the role, they play in reaching the vision of the school, how each owns the product of their work being contributory to the overall success of the organization leaves an affirmative footprint. In the long run, harmonious relationship is realized in the workplace.

“The school is now a big part of my life. I am proud too that the school produced graduates who are now mostly successful in their respective careers. The success of these alumni to some extent would be attributed to how the school nurtured them in their basic education. I will recommend it as a great place to work. There is a holistic formation of teaching and non-teaching personnel. There is also a personnel development program that helps in the personal, professional as well as spiritual growth of every employee. There is harmonious relationship among and between rank and file employees and leaders.”

School leadership and system administration are two crucial elements that cultivate the success of the organization as it sustains energy to take on future challenges at work. Once employees feel that they are one with the organization, every single detail concerning personal and professional growth is aligned with the organization’s mission, vision, goals, and objectives.

“The school is being run smoothly. The systems and procedures are in place to ensure smooth operation of the school. I see myself rendering my service in the school until my retirement. The leaders especially our director motivates me to really work well. I experienced his generosity, his sincere heart in helping his employees. Whenever I need financial assistance, I do not hesitate to ask our director since he is always ready to be of help. I would say that he really like to uplift the living condition of his employees. There are some coworkers that are blinded that they do not see his sincerity in his desire in improving the lives of his employees but personally, I know, and I believe that he is doing his best to really achieve the said goal. There are always two sides of a coin. The most rewarding experience was when I was given the chance to be appointed as the School Registrar.”

Providing employees, the opportunity to growth and thrive in a new environment leads to greater avenues of potential and fulfillment. Sooner or later, employees use this experience as a turning point in assessing how the organization has created a big impact in their lives.

The trust and confidence given me by the director was a remarkable experience. Now that I do not hold the said post anymore, I can still feel the respect of my colleagues. The biggest challenge for me is the preparation of the different documents for the PAASCU Accreditation and the challenge to meet the standards of the said accrediting body. The said experience was rewarding and at the same time the biggest challenge in my career because it is not easy to handle people, I must harness my people skills to be able to do my work as head of a unit.

The Prefect of Discipline substantiated the claims of these non-teaching personnel that the director has done a lot to systematize the operation of the school. It was also attested that seemingly there is a positive working environment as manifested by the harmonious relationship of the personnel. Also, the Non-Teaching Personnel stipulates their benefits as mentioned by the participants of this study.

4. Conclusion

Human resource is the most important resource of any organization. Teaching and non-teaching personnel play a vital role in the success of the academic and other related endeavor of any school. Employees' retention or how to make school personnel stay in the organization matters. Retention can be translated to big amount of savings for the school since it would not need to train new teachers if in case there is a big turnover. Parents as well as students are often emotionally attached to teachers and personnel so they would want to enroll their children if there are a good number of employees retained by the school. Decrease of enrolment will not be a concern since the community knows that the teachers and personnel of the school are seasoned and well trained because of the length of service in the school. Teachers/ personnel's retention really matters for a school.

The employees also become attached to the school if their basic, security as well as self-actualization needs are met. When basic needs are met, employees become contented and happy that they become more committed and would want to work for the success of the organizational goals. They stay with the school and work hand in hand with their leaders for the success of the school. They treat the success of the school as their own.

Motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic factors such as salaries and benefits, the ranking and promotion policy of the school, awards and citations as well as the personnel evaluation system may be addressed. The teaching and non-teaching staff are proud and satisfied with the salary and

benefits they receive. The salary of these personnel is comparative to their counterpart in the public school because of the ranking and promotion policy as well as the personnel evaluation system of the school. The benefits include among others educational scholarship for children/ dependents of personnel; provision of the educational tour local and abroad; scholarship grants to employees; provision of housing benefit for employees through the Bahay Guro. Intrinsic motivation may be caused by the satisfaction that teaching and non-teaching get from the success of the alumni as well as the success of the school in terms of the realization of its goals and objectives. They feel one with the success of the school.

The school personnel are exposed to different learning situations since through the various programs and activities the school engaged in. They are given the chance to hone their talents, competencies and skills through these programs and activities. Although contented and happy they also face challenges such as: how to pursue graduate studies, keeping up with the schedule of submission of documents and other aspects in preparation for accreditation, how to handle students' discipline and how to manage available time for the paper work and other school activities.

Teaching and non-teaching staff stay and remain loyal in the organization because they are happy and contented with the policies, working environment, school culture and climate. They feel motivated to do their best in the tasks that they are assigned to do. They value their work experiences even if there are challenges that come with them. They treat them as opportunities of personal, social and professional growth. They remain committed and devoted towards the realization of the school goals and objectives.

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